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ABSTRACT

Because of recent shifts in understanding the nature of knowledge and the process of learning, there may be major and long-lasting changes in the nature of educational research and its role for educators. Since most people understand through the use of metaphor, a metaphor that previously fostered the understanding of research is the assembly line of the industrial machine, which manufactures new knowledge in increasing quantities at more efficient rates. However, this comparison is no longer as appropriate as it once was. Some of the major problems that have characterized research include the following questions: (1) Who's the teacher and who's the researcher? (2) What is personal and what is professional? and (3) What are the differences between researching, learning, and teaching? Many of the dichotomies are being resolved by recognizing the duality of everything, such as (in language arts) learning to read by writing and teaching effectively by learning. A review of recent language arts research shows the same dichotomous nature for teacher-researchers, and perhaps for researcher-teachers. Powerful forces are at work to transform language arts research--and learning in general. (DF)

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RESEARCHING LANGUAGE ARTS: SHIFTING PARADIGMS

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When we stop to look at where we are as researchers in language arts, we usually focus on the areas to be researched, new topics that are opening up, old areas that have been rediscovered, and so on. Less frequently do we look at more basic questions of approaches to research, uses to which research is put, by whom, and in what contexts. I see what might be the beginnings of major and long-lasting changes in the nature of educational research and its role for educators. These changes seem to stem from shifts in our very understandings of the nature of knowledge and the process of learning. Granted, the huge shrine of educational research still stands solid and strong, but more and more cracks are appearing in the edifice. These cracks could simply remain as flaws or blemishes in the monolithic structure, or they could widen and deepen, weakening the structure to the point of crumbling and eventual transformation. In either case, the cracks deserve study.

Metaphors of Knowing

I've come to understand our status quo perspective on research as a product of a rationalistic, industrial age. We understand basically through metaphor, I believe, and the metaphor which has most shaped our understanding of research is the assembly line. Research is the industrial machine which, steaming and puffing, manufactures new knowledge in ever-increasing quantities and at more efficient rates. The people involves with research play highly specialized roles: someone devised the machine and builds it, others operate it, feeding in various raw materials from which knowledge is shaped or extracted, still others package and distribute the knowledge to a large mass of consumers who use and apply the knowledge until it either wears out, proves inadequate, is recalled for defects, or is replaced with a new, improved product. Within the metaphor, knowledge is an object. Yes, it is originally conceived and springs from within an individual or small group, but is soon separated - almost physically - from the original owner, mass produced, hawked by consultants, sales representatives, and university professors, and "bought" by educators with the currency of time (inservices, courses) money (for books, courses), or effort (writing papers to tell back to teachers what the Expert produced). In this view, knowledge can be transmitted, bartered, bought and sold, passed on as a gift or inheritance. Consumers claim ownership

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of knowledge, not by conceiving it, but by paying for it in some way. Very few people involved with research in any way know the entire manufacturing, distribution, and consumption process from beginning to end, but rather only the one specialized aspect with which they are involved. New people become researchers after basic training and some practice in how to do it, thus developing the specialized skills needed to manufacture various kinds of knowledge and to operate - perhaps even build - various kinds of research machines. Many others are familiar only with the finished product.

This metaphor is embedded in our very language. My colleagues speak of universities as places where knowledge is "generated" or "manufactured", as primary well-springs of the knowledge "explosion". We speak of "disseminating" research findings and of teachers as "consumers" of research. I was asked recently to do an inservice session for a group of teachers, but was warned that I should not try anything radical such as having them share with each other their insights, questions, etc., and to talk through together to some new understanding. Instead they "want to learn from me". Presumably, they expect me to bring the latest "new, improved product" and to transmit it to them. They see themselves as consumers, not as artisans or even manufacturers. The metaphor seems to fit well, almost too well.

I equate research with learning and my understanding of the learning process and the nature of knowledge, gained through my own experience as a learner, tells me that the metaphor doesn't fit in any basic sense. I've learned that I can't simply "take on" or "pick up" new information in its final, polished form as offered to me by someone else. On the contrary, I must reshape it, take it apart, see how it works, put it back together again, using my own tools of personal experience and language, making it fit with all else that I know (comprehension, assimilation) or making all else that I know fit with it (learning, accommodation). I've learned that new information is dead until I link it with my lived experience, thus breathing life into it. As long as it remains in the realm of the intellect alone as a conceptualization, it has no real life or power. I remain untouched and unchanged by it. Thus, if I go through this process of active transformation after encountering new information, I have not simply taken on reified knowledge from another, but have instead created or manufactured it myself or have learned what I already knew (since learning comes as much from within as without). The other person has served as catalyst in some way, but I own or possess the knowledge not through purchase or inheritance but as creator of it. I am involved with all parts of the process of creating knowledge (learning). While my story seems highly personal (as all knowledge must be by its very nature), I've had my insights confirmed by my work with many other learners who have trusted me enough to share their insights with me

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or who have simply been open enough with their feelings and thoughts to make my job as observer and hypothesizer far easier. So, while it sounds like my story, it may be a fairly basic story for us all.

Given my insight, what is another metaphor that can be used as an alternative to the assembly line? Perhaps some notions from a pre-industrial society may help. I've suggested in my personal account something more akin to the self-reliance of the extended family and the tribe of earlier times or of "undeveloped" societies in various parts of the world today. In such societies individuals or very small groups usually produce their own good, whether food, clothing, or shelter, for themselves. The next individual or family does the same and so on. While there is a great deal of duplication (and inefficiency) of effort from our "advanced" perspective, we can see that people are involved with all aspects of the creation of goods, that ownership derives from creation and not from purchase, that this system, while not as efficient and productive as the assembly line, is characterized by high degrees of self-reliance, self-sufficiency, and personal control and ownership. One's world is not only whole, but quite ecological. In certain ways, which we have lost, such societies are quite "developed". (There is a bit of a problem in using this metaphor since we no longer experience this system in our specialized, interdependent, industrial society and few of us choose to live as Thoreau did for a time on Walden Pond. I wonder if learning and knowledge might be the last frontier in which we'll be able to experience this self-reliance.)

Shifting Paradigms: A Personal Account

How does this metaphor apply to language arts research today? I'd like to start with myself and some of my own changes since that experience is largely how I've come to understand the cracks in the research edifice. My first "official" research was my thesis and dissertation work in graduate school. It was descriptive and experimental, focusing on the development of syntactic and semantic structures in children's language. I used measures, categories, and frameworks devised by others. I used those structures to impose "data" on the reality around me. I won an award for my dissertation, but during and after my work on it I felt detached from it, often wondering what I had learned from it. Afterward not only did others remain untouched and unchanged by my research, but so did I. There was no excitement, no satisfaction. I'm reluctant, almost ashamed, to admit it may have been just an exercise. "Is that all there is?" I asked.

I realized that looking at language structures, artificially separated from language use for learning and communication in a

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particular context, contributed to making the research less than real and to my feeling unsatisfied. So I moved into classrooms to ethnographically examine language in use for learning, to see what the surface structure of classroom interaction revealed and implied about language, learning, knowledge, values, and roles in a classroom. I was excited by looking at natural wholes working together. My research seemed closer to real life. Although I still played the role of the objective, impassive researcher within, but not part of, a context, I did see myself at times in the teachers I studied. I often felt remorse, because I did not like what I saw, but I felt excitement in gaining the insight. I was actually touched by my research, I saw myself as teacher differently. I consequently behaved differently as teacher. I had learned and changed through my research. It had linked with my own life just a little bit.

Despite the excitement, I was still left dissatisfied in merely recording surface structures and speculating on underlying meanings, expectations, beliefs, and assumptions. I wanted to probe below the surface, to get inside teachers' and students' heads, to see with their eyes. This step presented new problems since the data I was after wasn't easily accessible, "tight", or "clean". I found myself having to go beyond my "subjects" for insight - to philosophy, psychology, and literature at times. I had to use my understandings of my own beliefs, meanings, and so on, as a basis to work from. The basic question I was asking - how does language shape our experience and our knowing? - was no longer merely research or even professional concerns, but now spilled over to what I had previously called my personal life. I now found that I was researching life and living. I was my own "subject" as much as others were.

Perhaps a brief look at my current work will summarize the stage of my developing thus far. I am trying to learn more about young children's literary experiences, how they shape literature to their understanding and in turn how literature shapes their experience, as well as how these experiences with literature relate to their development as independent readers and writers. I'm approaching these questions by spending a great deal of time in a grade one classroom which is centered heavily on the use of literature within an integrated day. During the past school year in which I've been in this classroom, the strains which had developed within my research framework finally became too strong and broke. Perhaps "healed" might be a better term since what basically happened was a breaking down of dichotomies which have characterized my perception of research. Roderick (1983) described a similar experience for herself in a talk at my university last fall. I'll try to catalogue the major dichotomies which are mending for me.

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1 Who's the teacher and who's the researcher? Because of my own limitations of time and ease of access to the children, I made the teacher a collaborator, a co-researcher. We've both searched for readings, shared them, discussed them, and generally - through extensive discussions - have collaboratively built a fairly common framework of understanding for investigating the research questions. Because of her daily presence, she sees far more than I ever could and we collaboratively discuss it. Of course, I see things she doesn't when I visit. I teach at times and she observes, noticing things about the kids she doesn't notice when she is in the middle of things. Or she is free to sit down with one or two children for more direct probing or more careful observation. It is both collaborative research and collaborative pedagogy.

2 Who are the subjects of the study? While the children in the classroom are the primary focus of inquiry, we have encountered insights through incidents and examples elsewhere, some reported in books. It seems to be only intellectual games to deny use of those insights since they are not "officially" part of the study. Not only can the teacher retrieve useful insights and similar examples from last year's class but we've also tried talking to older elementary children about their recollections of their experiences with literature when they were younger (simply because there is so much that younger children are not aware of consciously and cannot report to us retrospectively). The pool of "subjects" just continues to grow.

3 When does the research begin or end? The school year may create some kind of artificial beginnings and endings, but the inquiry could be said to have begun well before September with some informal insights, a few random thoughts, several classroom visits, a growing interest, more reading, and so on. In similar fashion, there is a sense of not really having an end. Progress reports can be written up at any time, in the same way that a motion picture film can be freeze-framed at any particular time. Of course, once a report is written, it is out-of-date since the learning continues. I believe that Graves' (1983) writing research is characterized by the same ongoing, "progress-report" sense, even to the extent that reporting focuses and times emerge from the inquiry or are merely arbitrarily imposed by reporting deadlines.

4 Is a research procedure ever "set"? I've not been able

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to escape the conclusion that procedures need to be flexible, almost organic, growing with the inquiry. The more I enquire with certain procedures, the more insight I gain into the limitations of the procedures and devise procedures that may overcome those limitations. At times, situations thrust themselves upon our awareness and on an intuitive hunch we go with it. On one occasion the teacher read a book to the class and sensed a very powerful identification and response to the main character, a real worrier who even had a special chair to sit in for worrying. Trusting her intuition, the teacher (largely playing the role of researcher at this point) suggested they create their own worrying chair and take turns in it to worry aloud. Sure enough, the idea struck home and even the shyest children in the class clamoured for turns to share honestly their response to the book and its link with their own experiences. A rigid adherence to predetermined methods would have prevented gaining such insight in this way. For a long time, we have recognized that such flexible, almost inspired, insight was a key ingredient of good teaching. Perhaps it will become a hallmark of good researching. In short, I have a sense of being engaged in an eternal pilot project.

5 What counts as data? My description thus far obviously implies not only that much data will be what's called qualitative, but that much goes beyond the "objective" or "hard". Insights from autobiography, philosophy, or literature seem to apply. My own insights, recollections from my own childhood come to my consciousness unbidden to shape but also to sharpen my perception and understanding of events in the classroom. Perhaps I notice this phenomenon only because I am focusing on aesthetic experiences with young children, but much of what I and the classroom teacher sense is at an intuitive level. We often feel quite secure with the insight, but have little "hard, objective" data to support our understanding. The teacher particularly is adept at this, in large part, I think, because she remembers her own childhood experiences so clearly. All these sources and kinds of knowing provide for a very rich insight, multi-faceted and multi-layered, like the dolls or blocks of varying sizes that fit one within another. I'm reminded of the learning (and writing!) of someone like Sylvia Ashton-Warner or Herbert Kohl, but I hesitate when I remember they aren't researchers.

6 What is personal and what is professional? I've already

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hinted at how much the "research" keeps spilling over into my own life. I leave the classroom to come home and I see my own young children in a new light. My own childhood with literature becomes recreated for me, to be experienced and understood anew. My life as a reader of literature is forever changed. Not only do I understand more about literature's role in my own becoming as a person, but I'm drawn to it more and more and thus learn more about its role by experiencing it in relation to my own life. And, of course, the spilling over works in the other direction. I'm certain that I embarked on this focus of inquiry because of issues and concerns that had become quite important for me personally and I wanted to understand me and my own life as much as I wanted to understand that of children in a classroom. My own insights keep spilling over to shape and reshape the inquiry in the classroom. I finally can no longer tell when I'm "officially" researching and when I'm "merely" living and learning.

7 <u>What are the differences between researching, learning, and teaching</u>? I'm having more trouble finding the splits that used to be there for me. They all seem to be part of one, seamless, whole process. My understanding is less compartmentalized (e.g., knowledge about children vs. knowledge about me or research knowledge vs. "regular" knowledge). I have less "dead" knowledge. It seems that any intellectual understanding must gain its power from living that is understood at an intuitive, subconscious level. That insight can gradually work its way to conscious awareness to become intelligence that is powerful in the sense of wisdom, of "ringing true". Otherwise to try to go directly to the intellect raises the danger of dead knowledge, safely compartmentalized away from the rest of our being and understanding. As a result, I'm less the same as a result of my "research". I cannot remain untouched and unchanged as a result of this kind of holistic learning. At the same time, however, I realize how little meaning - or life - my learning will have for most others and wonder how I can even begin to convey it to them - particularly if they seek to grasp only the intellectual, rational aspects of my learning that originally had many dimensions - emotional, intuitive, even spiritual. Only if I can help it "ring true" with their lived experience will inersubjectivity occur. Where it will all end, I don't know. Yet I have intimations of my understanding being shaped more like literature or a film than like exposition. (I am reminded of Taylor's (1983) "home

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movie" approach to her recent research.) There is today a slightly shifting style of research writing, tending just a bit not only to the popular but also to the narrative, anecdote, or story. Perhaps philosophy, with its combination of experiential narrative and classified reflection may become a helpful model for future developments.

With the breakdown of dichotomies, I've been able to more easily entertain dialectic notions, notions which had seemed absurdly paradoxical before but now coexist quite comfortably. I also became aware of how dialectic our lives are: we each have both male and female in us, we each have both child and adult in us. In the language arts field I see the same duality: we learn to read by writing and vice versa, we teach best by learning and vice versa, and so on. All is duality. All is oneness.

Shifting Paradigms: Language Arts Research Today

While speaking of my own experiences I've referred to some other research in the field. I'd like to turn my attention more directly to that other work to indicate how I see it fitting with my own insights. I believe that the current trend toward "teacher as researcher" is a manifestation of the same changes that have occurred within me, that it has the same roots. We see many teachers, alone or as part of support groups, raising their own instructional questions and inquiring into them in their own classrooms. If university personnel are involved, it is as partners or collaborators of some kind with the teacher, rather than the traditional research director or Expert. There seems to be a small, but growing, number of graduate students who conduct their thesis research in classrooms in which they themselves are teaching. We see a slightly shifting style in the write-ups of research, a more popular style, one that uses narration and description in addition to classification, that tries to empower the intellectual with the intuitive. These changes have been almost underground changes, happening quietly here and there, in a steady, but not pushy, fashion. (Britton (1983) refers to the teacher-as-researcher approach as "a quiet form of research.") However, by now the evidence is more public and discernible, not yet in the pages of Reading Research Quarterly or Research in the Teaching of English, but in presentations at national and regional conferences, in the pages of the Language Arts and The Reading Teacher, in some graduate classes and in some graduate theses at some institutions. We've noticed in recent years how many of the best teachers become researchers (officially or unofficially), yet never lose their sense

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of teacher. I wonder if the reverse might eventually be true, that good researchers will increasingly become teachers (officially or unofficially), yet not lose the sense of researcher. In order to conduct good instructional research might we university people one day need to enter a classroom to teach?

Whether these trends will remain only a fringe element in the research community or whether they herald a brave new world, they represent major shifts in some of the paradigms and assumptions of traditional research. I've alluded to these paradigms in discussing my own experiences. Let me be more explicit here. I believe that such shifts represent a changing notion of control or ownership of knowledge. Some learners have become disenchanted with the ineffectiveness of the assembly line metaphor of knowledge production and distribution. Too many educators know certain things but don't seem to live them, for if we lived what we know about children's language development, the face of education would be radically changed just as would the face of our Christian society if people truly lived the gospels. The past two or three decades have been a golden age for educational research. Yet, there is little evidence, I believe, of widespread, lasting, or deep change in classroom practices generally, beyond a surface level, bandwagon cloning that seems endemic to North American education. Surface structures may change but most language arts teaching remains behaviorist at its core. In addition, I believe that many more people have learned to learn better and have discovered for themselves the insight that they must create their own knowledge and not merely be "taught" by someone else. I believe it is akin to the metaphor of a more self-reliant, pre-industrial society I alluded to earlier. In fact, Graves (1983) has suggested that learners need to learn "to live off the land" . Such a shift implies a more egalitarian sharing of our common currency (knowledge) and encourages a "power to the people" (in this case "to the teacher") cry. Knowledge is power, but it isn't as if teachers have not had knowledge. They have, but far greater value has been placed on "research knowledge" than on their own personal "action" knowledge (Barnes, 1976) or "tacit" or "personal" knowledge (Polanyi, 1959). The elitism that has surrounded research still remains (as evidenced, I'm afraid, by the participation at this conference). Many of our followers are still awed - and even comforted - by the mysteries of our liturgies and our scared liturgical language. Yet the power and reverence that has been associated with <u>Research</u> is not as strong and intact as it once was because more and more educators have realized that to truly know, <u>they</u> must possess the knowledge, by controlling their own learning process. Thus, paradoxically, <u>research</u> has never been so widely revered. We Experts in research (priests) may soon become an endangered species. Kopp (1972) has urged learners, if they meet the Buddha (guru) on the road to understanding, to kill him and to become their own

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teachers.

An even more dramatic and bedrock shift linked to this power issue is an epistomological change in the theory of knowing upon which research approaches and methodology have been based. The traditional framework has been a rationalistic or positivistic one, based on a linear, categorical, cause-and-effect, basically Newtonian world view. In such a world, knowledge is objectified and decontextualized. We have elevated the rational to an almost sacred level and distrusted all other ways of knowing. (Of course, it is the intellect that distrusts ways of knowing other than the intellectual.) The trap is worsened by the fact that the intellect is basically a coward, unwilling to trust what's different or uncertain, wanting complete certainty before accepting the uncertain. I read someplace that "Knowledge is the autopsy on the corpse of experience". It seems an appropriate warning for us today. We've managed to create in our formal research procedures a highly restricted way of knowing, yet our intellect seems to have convinced us that it is just the opposite, the apex of knowing. In addition, this impersonal, generalized, decontextualized way of knowing allows us to remain quite safe, untouched, and unthreatened by change (in the sense of any major paradigm shift). Any such knowledge can be kept compartmentalized and separate from the rest of our existence while we conceptually manipulate the knowledge. Unfortunately, such knowledge is dead and will have no power for us or for others.

> Intellectual man had become an explaining creature. Fathers to children, wives to husbands, lecturers to listeners...the history, the structure, the reasons why. For the most part, in one ear and out the other. The soul wanted what it wanted. It had its own natural knowledge. It sat unhappily on the superstructures of explanation, poor bird, not knowing which way to fly.
>
> Saul Bellow
> Mr. Sammler's Planet

The alternate view of knowledge has been referred to as whole, experiential, dialectic, relativistic, even Einsteinian. Such shifts in knowing and being are happening in other fields - science, medicine, religion - and have been for some time. In this view, knowledge is not only intellectual, but also emotional, experiential, physical, even spiritual at times. It is rooted and exists not only in a particular knower but also in a particular context of time and space. In the same way that we ask

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rhetorically, which is the danger and which is the dance?, we can also ask which is the knower and which is the knowledge? Dichotomies fade in importance - and are even seen as counterproductive. They are replaced with dialectics. It becomes more difficult to distinguish "variables" in the classroom, to know who is researcher and who is teacher and when each is doing what. (I even read a manuscript recently describing pupils taking field notes in a classroom as part of an ethnography.) The whole process of teaching and learning merges and Freire's (1970) terminology of educator-educatee (for "teacher") and educatee-educators (for "students") begins to make sense. Our structure of knowing is not only more fluid and organic, but even less discernible at times. Because knowledge belongs to individuals and is more closely rooted in personal experiences it is more personally tailored and less public (conformist). (Of course, such a description breaks traditional research's commandments of validity and generalizability.) I've used the metaphor of knowledge as object in my discussion of the theory of knowledge upon which a mainstream approach to research has been based and it seems to work well. It's been more difficult to find an appropriate metaphor for the alternate theory I've been exploring. What I've settled on for now is the notion of personality. It's clear that it can belong only to an individual and can't be removed or separated from the person. It can change and grow over time. And yet, while being so individual, it also seems to have elements of our common humanity so that, while it is different, it is at the same time similar, derived from our common lived experience. This metaphor, while not perfect, seems to work fairly well. But at times I wonder - is it a metaphor?

Meanings for Canadian Language Arts Research

What I have been discussing in this paper is not another version of the experimental vs. ethnographic argument. The tendency toward ethnography in language arts research is what I would characterize as a pendulum shift, to use Ferguson's (1982) terminology, i.e., change along the same dimension. The stirrings which I've sensed in the field - and in myself - and which I do not yet understand well may be better characterized by Kuhn's (1970) sense of a paradigm shift, major restructuring or transformation along a whole new dimension. He points out that for long periods of time work within a field is based on a particular metaphor or paradigm and becomes what he calls normal science (and what I might call orthodoxy). Once in a great while, however, people working within the field make an intuitive leap to create a more powerful paradigm which leads to a dramatically new way of seeing and working in the field, what Kuhn calls revolutionary science (witness the New Physics, e.g., Zukav, 1979). At first, there is much resistance to

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the new paradigm by the orthodox view and there is stress within the field. (I heard one of my colleagues cynically claim only recently that Graves' work was not "real research".) Gradually, the new paradigm gains general acceptance and the field enters again a period of normal science, until the next revolution, and so on.

I am certain that powerful forces are at work to transform language arts research - and learning in general. Whether they are different enough and powerful enough to be instances of Kuhn's revolutionary science I am uncertain. I chose to write on this topic, however, becuse we often discuss what we're researching but not how we're researching, what we know but not how we know it. I'm concerned that many discussions I hear on language arts research seem oblivious to alternative paradigms for viewing a question and thus remain trapped paradigmatically. Or the discussion may hinge on different paradigms but participants don't seem aware of these different assumptions. They compare apples and oranges and finally give up when one can't convince the other that an apple is an orange or vice versa. In either case, the discussins remain at a surface level and don't penetrate to the underlying metaphors.

The picture I've described may be a uniquely Canadian possibility. At the least, I feel that Canada may be a more fertile ground than the U.S. in which it may flourish. The larger U.S. sociopolitical context, as well as the focus on education more specifically, seems well entrenched in a reactionary period. "Normal science" has a great deal of momentum behind it. Orthodoxy flourishes. U.S. educators whose work is developing in the directions I've described in this paper often describe their situation as a "fight" or a "war" with opposing forces.

The seeds of such reactionism exist in Canada, but perhaps a greater tolerance in Canada has allowed differences to exist and even to thrive in places. We continually face the danger of being the Canadian tail on a U.S. dog, but we do seem to have room to develop (or at least to explore) a "revolutionary" science, not as a common national identity, but as one aspect of a diversity which is tolerated and perhaps even respected. What concerns me is that if a favourable environment does exist here, it exists in more of a negative way than a positive way. Developments may have occurred only because no other pressures worked against them, not because we have constructively established such a firm base and hospitable climate for such work. To do so might involve more conscious attention to paradigms of knowing upon which research approaches are based as well as explication and development of our understanding of "research" based on alternative metaphors. Perhaps the growing body of work along these lines could be identified, even collected in some ways. If a revolution is to occur, such efforts will not only foster it, but might help to make it a quiet and peaceful one, yet

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also a powerful one. I'm reminded of Morley Callaghan's comments on the debate about Canadian identity and culture and wonder if they apply to us as researchers.

> Forget all about the words "identity" and "culture", just never mention them. Seek only excellence and in good time people all over the world will ask about Canadians.

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PROFESSOR DILLON IN SEARCH OF THE HORSE

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Presented at the University of Lethbridge SSHRC Invitational Reading/ Language Arts Research Conference, June 7-9, 1984

In 1977 I wrote a speech opening with these lines:
" My major contention today is that reading researchers do not spend enough time in schools and classrooms where reading is taught and learned. More generally, reading researchers have too little contact with the reader as he reads and learns." (Tuinman, 1980, p.9)

This sentiment, it would appear , Dr. Dillon would whole heartedly endorse. But from that point on our paths seem to diverge. In fact, the paper I just referred to can be read as an alternative answer to most of the questions Professor Dillon seems to pose.

Dr. Dillon forecasts a major and desirable breakdown of the " monolithic structure", the "huge shrine of educational research", somehow associated with "reactionary" tendencies. He sees an "intuitive leap", the "beginnings of major and long-lasting changes in the nature of educational research" (p.1)

I have trouble with Dr. Dillon's line of argument on a number of grounds, perhaps best summarized as follows.

1) He seems to misrepresent traditional science. Individual scientists are not assembly line workers, they acknowledge the role of intuition, they have no confidence in discovering absolute truths, they philosophize about understanding. Niels Bohr, when asked about the possibility of a breakthrough in research on atoms once remarked that first it would be necessary to understand understanding better.

2. Qualitative research has been accepted widely among educational researchers much longer than Dr. Dillon intimates. We are hardly on the verge of a new breakthrough in this respect.

3. Where Dr. Dillon discriminates between various kinds of knowledge such as "research knowledge", " personal action knowledge", "emotional knowledge" he fails to comment in any depth on the various legitimate functions of these different modes of knowing and their limitations. This perhaps is the most troublesome aspect of Dr. Dillon's paper.

If Dr. Dillon's main thesis were that language arts researchers ought to be spending more time with the children's whose learning they wish to study, I could hardly be more supportive.

However, he appears to advance the thesis that empirical, quantitative, objective research is dead or dying because it has been overtaken by a new paradigm. To this view I take exception.

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Dr. Dillon's disappointment in the fruits of his own and our "traditional" efforts at language arts research is quite understandable. The immediate benefits of "research" are rather limited. Pearson, in a recent review (1984) notes that research on comprehension has resulted in two major findings : reading, and particularly comprehension, is an interactive process; and, in considering how readers comprehend, attention to both content and process variables is important. If Pearson's summary is correct, these are meager pickings indeed. Personally ,I am somewhat more charitable, but there is no denying that "research" has not fullfilled the, perhaps ill-conceived, hopes of many practitioners. Stephen Jay Gould, in an essay on Crime, Cause and Correlation warns us against unneccessarily complex (read dramatic!) explanations of phenomena. He writes:

" We should start with the immediate and the obvious (they usually work) and move to the complex and indirect when our initial efforts fail. Have a healthy respect for simple answers.; the world is not always a deep conundrum fit only for consideration by certified scolars."(Gould, 1983) Applied to Dillon's thesis this translates as follows : disappointing results of research are as likely the consequence of ill-conceived questions, poorly designed experiments, difficult laboratory circumstances, ill-trained researchers, reward systems inconducive to solid research, and so on, than they are the consequence of improper paradigms. (For an elaboration see Tuinman, 1980.)

At another level, however, Dr. Dillon 's discomfort with empirical research can be interpreted as a search for the horse referred to in the title of this critique.

Cole (1984) relates that Victor Weisskop, MIT, National Medal of Science winner, once professed not to understand Einstein's General Theory of Relativity. When pressed for an explanation he told this story:

" It's like the peasant who asks the engineer how the steam engine works. The engineer explains exactly how the steam moves through the engine, how all the parts move, and so on. And when he's finished the peasant says :'Yes, I understand all that. But where is the horse? Weisskop then notes:' That's how I feel about general relativity. I know how it works in great detail, but I don't understand where the horse is."

My suspicion is, that Dr. Dillon has arrived at Weisskop's dilemma in the very personal intellectual evolution to which he courageously refers : he realizes that he doesn't know where the horse is. This is a very precious, but potentially unsettling insight as Dr. Dillon so freely admits. It calls for the recognition of the limits of one mode of knowing and the acknowledgement of the possibility of others. It does not, I submit, call for the rejection of traditional methods of doing either physical or social science research.

All ways of knowing have built-in limitations. To expect that any, whether they be mystic, magical, theological, rational, scientific or phenomenological, would discover an absolute and final truth is unrealistic. The question to ask is : "What is this way of knowing good for?" Our discussion of Dr. Dillon's proposal this morning should center on that question. Strasser (1962) in his analysis of the relationship between phenomenology and the empirical study of man explores in depth the potential and limits of three modes of knowing which he lables prescientic intuition, interpretation and vision. Dr. Dillon, without any formal philosophical arguments seems on the verge of eliminating Strasser's second stage which the latter also refers to as "anticipatory interpretation". A related treatment of these questions can be found in Scriven's contribution to a volume on "Behaviorism and phenomenology--contrasting bases for psychology."(1964)

Dr. Dillon is right: many truths will emerge just from common observation, from common sense interpretation. But Dillon is also very wrong: we are not entering a major paradigm shift. Ever since Dilthey, and actually before, the tension between explanation and understanding, in Dr. Jenkinson's terms, has existed and been accepted as unavoidable and indeed beneficial

Understanding leads to satisfaction; explanation to control. Understanding is personal, explanation social. Understanding is temporary, fleeting; explanation more stable. For many questions of pedagogy, intuition and understanding suffice; Man, however, is firm-wired to analyze, to decompose, to synthesize. Any effort to eradicate that desire to take apart and put together again is futile.

I have dreaded the moment that someone would introduce the term--I'm unsure it is a concept--"whole knowledge", ever since I learned of " whole language" . Now the deed has been done...by one in our midst. Let us reason with Professor Dillon; let us plead with him not to propagate the term in any wider circles. Knowledge is not whole; understanding however, or as Strasser puts it, vision, is. To blur the lines of distinction does a disservice to both science and phenomenology.

I don't believe Dr. Dillon needs the arguments he sets forth to accept that intelligent, experienced, critical, analytical teachers are important sources of insight. Neither does he need to demolish experimental, empirical work to accept that being with children , working with them, can be and almost always is an intellectually and emotionally satisfying experience, often leading to new germs of insight. Such intimacy, I have acknowledged before, is indeed as necessary for good research as it is for good phenomenology.

Improvement in our knowledge and our understanding of classroom phenomena will follow most directly from increased rigor in our observing, describing and reasoning.

Let me leave you with this thought:We can only accept that the earth is flat if the perspective of the observer is specified.

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